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# The Art Gallery

"PARIS-MURCIE."



A French fair of extraordinary proportions, recently held in Paris, in aid of the sufferers by the inundations in Spain, one of the most profitable ventures was the publication of a paper called "Paris-Murcie." Only one number was issued, but this reached a circulation of two hundred thousand, producing nearly fifty thousand dollars. A copy of it lies before us. It is a kind of album, to which nearly every European celebrity has contributed his or her autograph, which is produced in facsimile. The feature, however, which will particularly interest our readers, is its illustrations, which, for the most part, consist of facsimile sketches by the great painters of Paris. We reproduce three of the best of these, respectively by Detaille, De Neuville and Louis Leloir. The first two named are well known in this country, and they have been fully illustrated in these columns. Leloir, our readers will remember, is the artist to whom we are indebted for the original of "Libellule," of which an adaptation for the decoration of a plaque was given in our last number. Mélingue, who contributes a sketch of a serious looking cavalier sheathing his sword, is not known even by name in this country. He may be described as the successor of Bocage, and the predecessor of Fechter, in historical melodrama; like the latter he combines the talent of the player with that of the sculptor. Sarah Bernhardt borrowed from him the idea of modelling on the stage. In *Benevenuto Cellini*, a blood-and-thunder drama in which he used to play at the Porte Saint Martin, he rough-modeled a statue in the presence of the audience; and, in impersonating *Salvator Rosa*, in another play, he made a lightning portrait of one of the brigands of the piece, and so paid his ransom as their prisoner.

Among other illustrations there is a herald on horseback, "Hérault d'Armes de Murcie," attributed to Meissonier, although it might well be doubted whether he contributed more than the signature. The drawing of the horse is positively bad, and the handling is not at all in Meissonier's usual style. The sketch has been carefully engraved by Charles Baude, however, and given the place of honor, being printed on a separate sheet. Cabanel makes a very rough sketch of his "Echo," which visitors to the Metropolitan Museum of Art will remember, for the wonderful quality of its flesh tints, as one of the most delightful pictures that hung in the old rooms of the Museum in Fourteenth Street. On the front page, Gustave Doré contributes an allegorical picture, representing an angel coming over the waters to the relief of the sufferers by the inundation.

Madrazo shows a young woman in an artist's studio, energetically pushing her umbrella through a portrait of herself which does not please her. Boulanger has a

striking crayon study, showing the backs of a male and female musician; Vibert, a pen and ink sketch of a Catalonian water-carrier; Carolus Duran, a pen portrait, of *whom* we are not told, but it is evidently that of a man of character; Gérôme, a Turkish musician; Bastien Le Page, a very rough sketch of a figure reading; and Bouguereau contributes a sketch of the mother and child in his important picture which is at present awaiting a purchaser at Knoedler's gallery in New York. Berne-Bellecour, Dubufe, Fleury, J. P. Laurens, Fantin Latour, Clairin, Hebert, Henner, and Louise Abbema complete the list of artist contributors to the "Paris-Murcie." None of the sketches are remarkable, but nearly all are interesting; some in themselves, and others for the signatures they bear.



SKETCH BY DETAILLE. CONTRIBUTED TO "PARIS-MURCIE."

## BOSTON CORRESPONDENCE.

A DEFENSE OF WILLIAM M. HUNT—THE ART CLUB'S WINTER EXHIBITION—A NEW SOCIETY.

BOSTON, January 10, 1880.

IT is rumored about through a shocked and indignant community that one of your New York artists, after an inspection of the memorial exhibition at the Art Museum here of the works of the late Wm. M. Hunt, graciously conceded our lamented master the rank of "advanced amateur." The same tone of remark has been heard here from some of the young fellows who have just returned from the ateliers of Paris and Munich. To all of

which the lay public of amateurs and connoisseurs respond as with one voice: "If this be amateur work, let us have no more professional." The question is what do we want of a picture? Is it the mere display of a trade or trick learned? Is it not rather some effect, some idea, a fixing upon canvas of something in human character or the beauty of nature, that stirs the emotions? What matters it how the effect is produced so that the idea is conveyed, the sentiment stirred? Only let the inaccuracy, or indifference as to finish, be apart from the idea or effect aimed at, so as not to blur or mar that, and the painting may have been laid on with trowelfuls of mortar and brick-dust for all the great public outside the painter trade cares either now or in the years to come; for paintings with soul-

moving sentiment in them live for daily blessing and beauty long after paintings illustrating merely the skill of the man who painted them have become garret-lumber or mere school-apparatus. But it is not admitted by any means that Hunt did not know his academic anatomy, and perspective, laws of composition, and all the rest of the technique of art. He knew it so well, through such an education and experience in Europe as only those favored from birth and boyhood with wealth and social position are able to enjoy, that he came to rate it at its true value, as the mere means and instrument, not the end and sum, of art.

I thought my last letter, written in the heat of a first and single rapid view of this exhibition, might have been too enthusiastic, after hearing some of the comments of your Tile Club delegation at the show, and being chilled by the criticisms of the painters here as to flesh-tints, ears and knuckle-bones. But repeated visits to the great collection as it has been added to and re-arranged from time to time, have left me well content with my first judgment. The criticism which calls this "con amore" many-sidedness, this universal sympathy, this quick and witty expression of the genial charm of things, this dashing at the substance and spirit of a motif without regard to grammatical composition and the precepts of the professors—the criticism which calls this "amateur" is of the same sort of scholastic stupidity and technical narrowness that led poor old pedantic Ben Jonson to patronize Shakespeare; and those classic precisians of the old French drama, with their "unities" to rate "Hamlet," "Macbeth," and "Lear" as farces! It is a fortunate thing that the most prominent figure in American art in this epoch of its birth and awakening is one that stands for freedom and revolt against "the letter that killeth." With a whole generation of artists at school and the French system of preternaturally perfect technique the dominant one of the day, it cannot but be wholesome that this splendid testimony should be borne to the value of the "informing spirit" above the technicalities of art, when all is done.

The winter exhibition of the Boston Art Club opened last Friday. It is only the same old two-and-six—not-